

Washington, DC – Congresswoman Betty McCollum (MN-04) today applauded the U.S. House of Representatives for approving a landmark measure to authorize the first federal resource study of the Mississippi River as part of final passage of the Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act (H.R. 2996). This will be the first comprehensive study ever conducted to identify best practices to protect and preserve America's greatest waterway.

"The Mississippi River is a living American treasure and this groundbreaking preservation study is long overdue. After years of pushing for our nation to conduct this important analysis, I am pleased the U.S. House of Representatives has finally acted to safeguard, conserve and expand the environmental, cultural and economic value of the Mississippi River so that future generations can appreciate and enjoy our country's most precious waterway," Congresswoman McCollum said.

The FY10 Interior and Environment Appropriations bill includes language authored by Congresswoman McCollum, which states, "the National Park Service shall complete a special resource study along the route of the Mississippi River in the counties contiguous to the river from its headwaters in the State of Minnesota to the Gulf of Mexico."

"This study is a significant initial step towards preservation. Minnesota contains over 10,000 lakes and is the headwaters of the Mississippi River. The river has always been central to our region. Railroads along its banks continue to provide good jobs and transport people and products to their destinations," Congresswoman McCollum added.

Congresswoman McCollum has been working for over six years to authorize the national study of the body of water that is part of the Great Lakes chain of lakes. The FY 2010 spending bill includes \$10.46 billion to clean the nation's waters, protect its air and restore its lands. It allocates \$667 million to protect the nation's great water bodies including the Great Lakes, Puget Sound, and the Chesapeake Bay. It also provides \$475 million for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, which will involve the coordination and collaboration of 16 Federal agencies, the States of the Great Lakes Region, local government, and citizens groups in an effort to restore the source of 20 percent of the world's fresh surface water.

Congresswoman Betty McCollum (MN-4) serves on the House Appropriations & Budget Committees.

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